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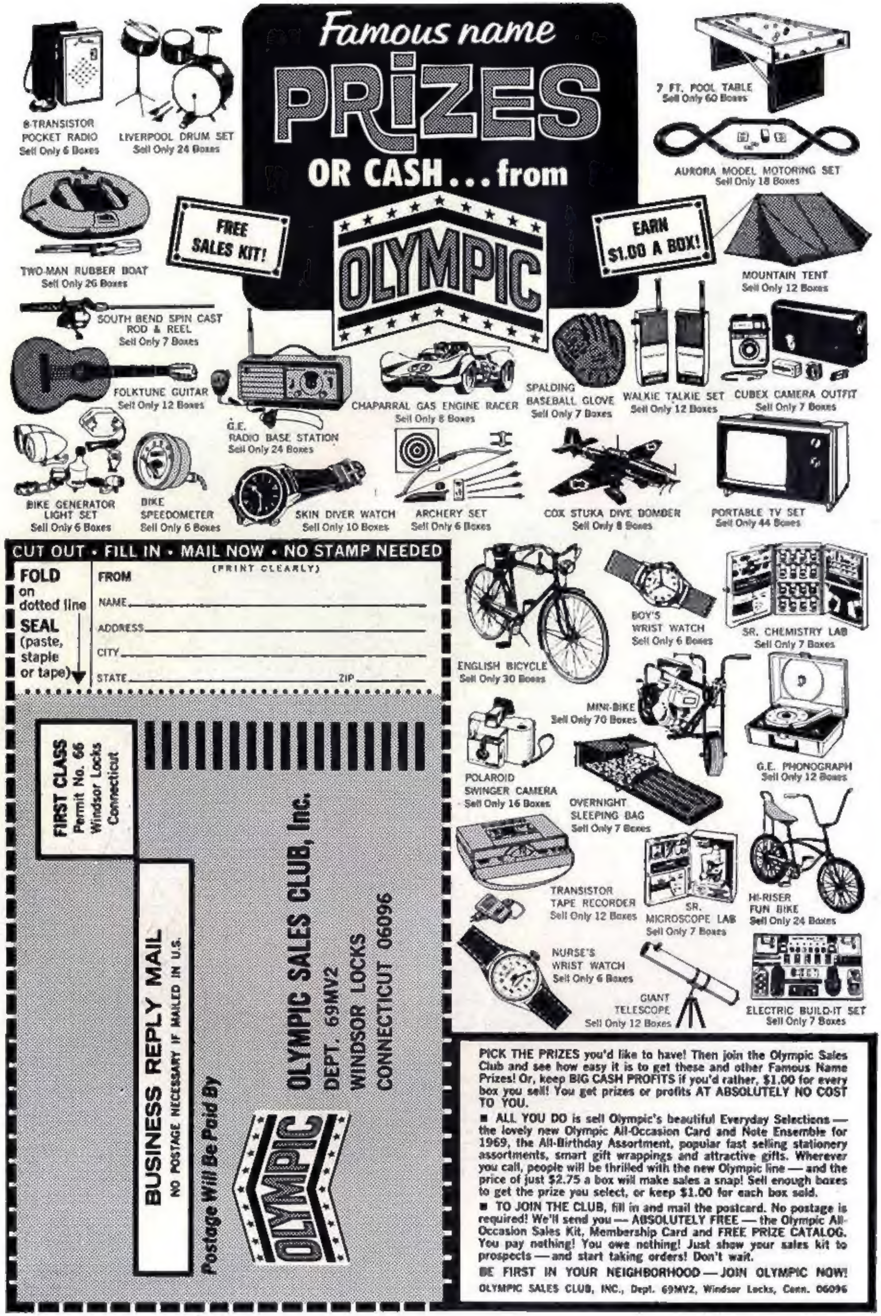
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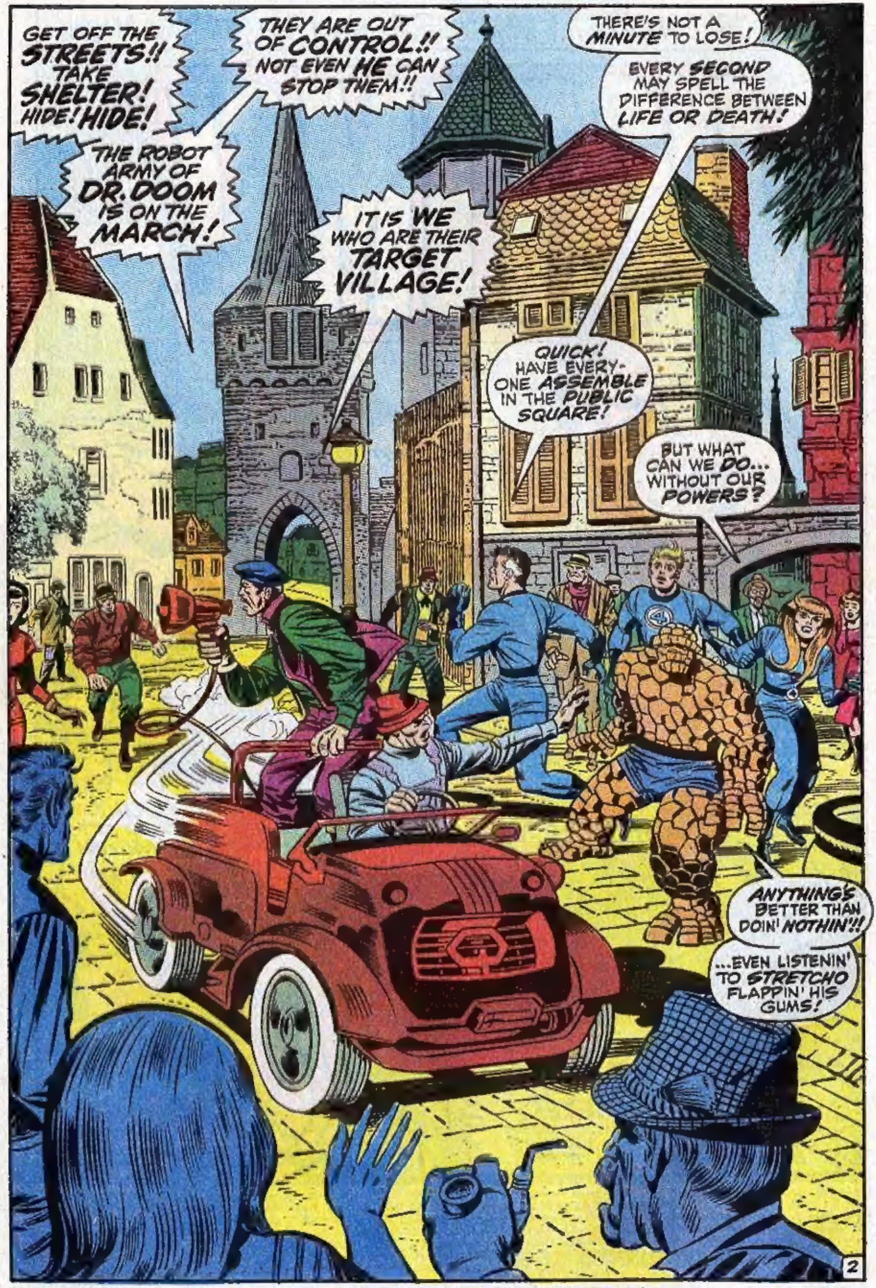
GET OFF THE STREETS!! TAKE SHELTER! HIDE! HIDE!
THEY ARE OUT OF CONTROL!! NOT EVEN HE CAN STOP THEM!!
THERE'S NOT A MINUTE TO LOSE!
EVERY SECOND MAY SPELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE OR DEATH!
THE ROBOT ARMY OF DR. DOOM IS ON THE MARCH!
IT IS WE WHO ARE THEIR TARGET VILLAGE!
QUICK! HAVE EVERY-ONE ASSEMBLE IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE!
BUT WHAT CAN WE DO... WITHOUT OUR POWERS?
ANYTHING'S BETTER THAN DOIN' NOTHIN'!!
...EVEN LISTENIN' TO STRETCHO FLAPPIN' HIS GUMS!
2

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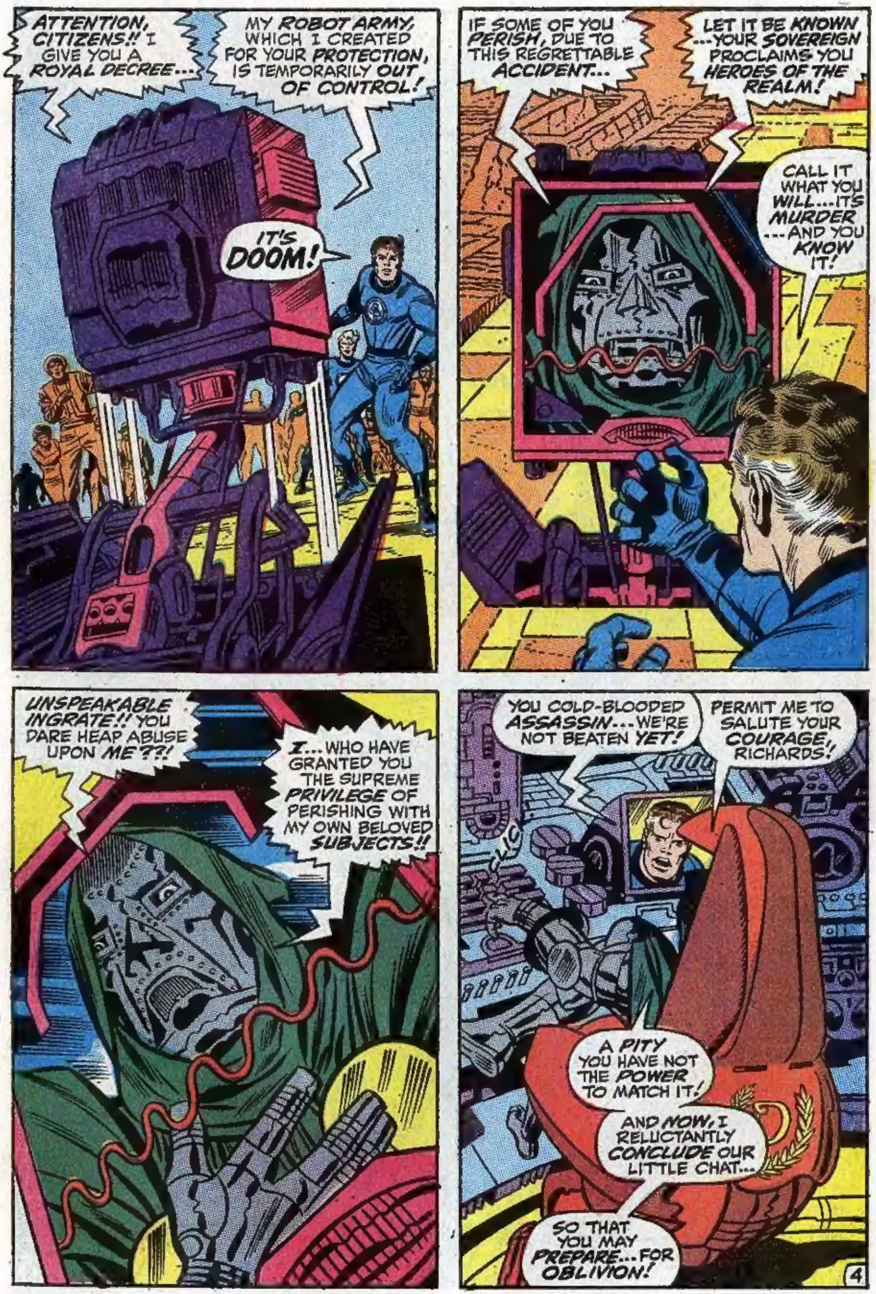

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MY ROBOT ARMY, WHICH I CREATED FOR YOUR PROTECTION, IS TEMPORARILY OUT OF CONTROL!
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IF SOME OF YOU PERISH, DUE TO THIS REGRETTABLE ACCIDENT...
LET IT BE KNOWN ...YOUR SOVEREIGN PROCLAIMS YOU HEROES OF THE REALM!
CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL...IT'S MURDER ---AND YOU KNOW IT!
UNSPEAKABLE INGRATE!! YOU DARE HEAP ABUSE UPON ME??!
I...WHO HAVE GRANTED YOU THE SUPREME PRIVILEGE OF PERISHING WITH MY OWN BELOVED SUBJECTS!!
YOU COLD-BLOODED ASSASSIN...WE'RE NOT BEATEN YET!
PERMIT ME TO SALUTE YOUR COURAGE, RICHARDS!
A PITY YOU HAVE NOT THE POWER TO MATCH IT!
AND NOW, I RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDE OUR LITTLE CHAT...
SO THAT YOU MAY PREPARE...FOR OBLIVION!
4

EVEN AT THE HEIGHT OF THEIR ACCURSED POWER, THEY WERE BARELY A MATCH FOR ME!
BUT NOW... HAVING RENDERED THEM HELPLESS VIA MY HYPNO-PERSUADER, THE GAME IS FINALLY ENDED... THE VICTORY FINALLY MINE!
EVEN THOUGH THE HYPNOTIC EFFECT SHALL SOON WEAR OFF... BY THEN IT WILL BE TOO LATE!
BY THEN... THEY'LL BE AT THE MERCY OF MY INVINCIBLE, OMNIPURPOSE ROBOTS!
BUT, EVEN THE PLAN OF DR. DOOM HAS NOT BEEN TOTALLY FLAWLESS...!
5

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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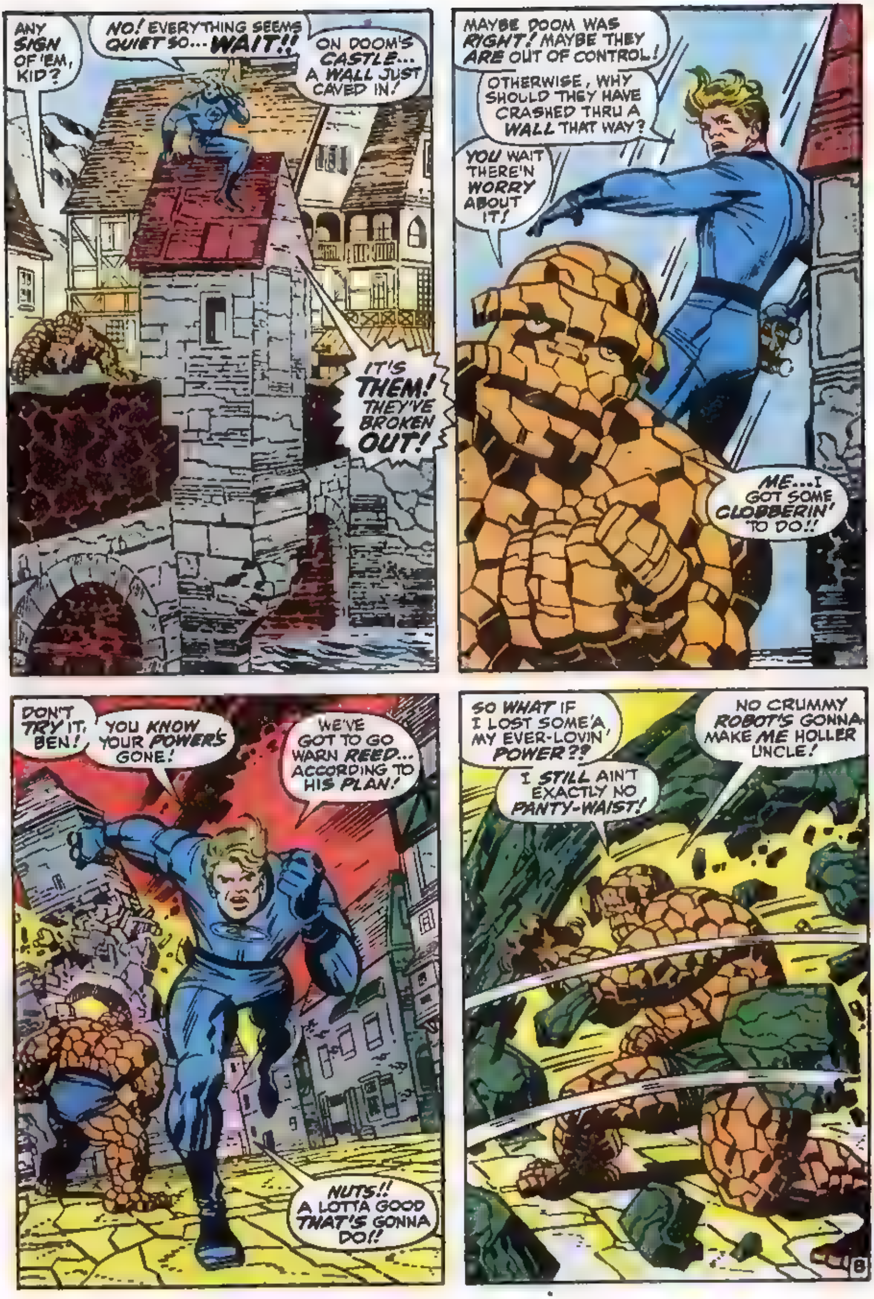
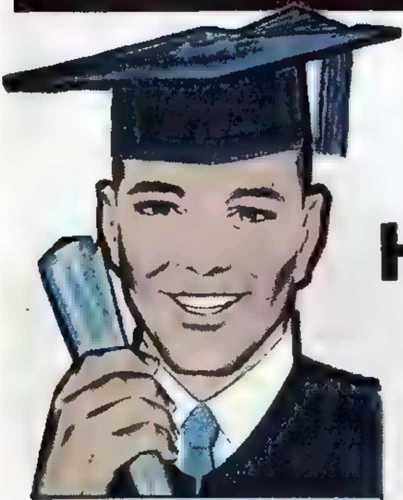
THE ROBOTS! THEY HAVE BROKEN FREE!
DROP YOUR WEAPONS! TAKE TO THE HILLS!
NOTHING ON EARTH CAN STOP THEM!
THEIR MEMORY BANKS CONTAIN BUT ONE SINGLE THOUGHT...
DESTROY!
DESTROY! DESTROY!
7


ANY SIGN OF 'EM, KID?
NO! EVERYTHING SEEMS QUIET SO... WAIT!!
ON DOOM'S CASTLE... A WALL JUST CAVED IN!
IT'S THEM! THEY'VE BROKEN OUT!
MAYBE DOOM WAS RIGHT! MAYBE THEY ARE OUT OF CONTROL!
OTHERWISE, WHY SHOULD THEY HAVE CRASHED THRU A WALL THAT WAY?
YOU WAIT THERE'N WORRY ABOUT IT!
ME...I GOT SOME CLOBBERIN' TO DO!!
DON'T TRY IT, BEN!
YOU KNOW YOUR POWERS GONE!
WE'VE GOT TO GO WARN REED... ACCORDING TO HIS PLAN!
NUTS!! A LOTTA GOOD THAT'S GONNA DO!!
SO WHAT IF I LOST SOME'A MY EVER-LOVIN' POWER??
I STILL AIN'T EXACTLY NO PANTY-WAIST!
NO CRUMMY ROBOT'S GONNA MAKE ME HOLLER UNCLE!
8

HERE COMES THE FIRST OF 'EM...
...'N HERE GOES MY HAYMAKER!!
HEY! WADDAYA KNOW??
LOOKS LIKE I GOT A HUNK'A MY BLUE-EYED STRENGTH BACK!!
'N THAT MEANS IT'S GONNA BE A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME!
SPOK
YUCCHHH! I FERGOT...
EVEN WHEN YA TEAR 'EM APART...
THE BLASTED PIECES KEEP ON ATTACKIN'!!

Second chance for high school drop-outs to get a diploma



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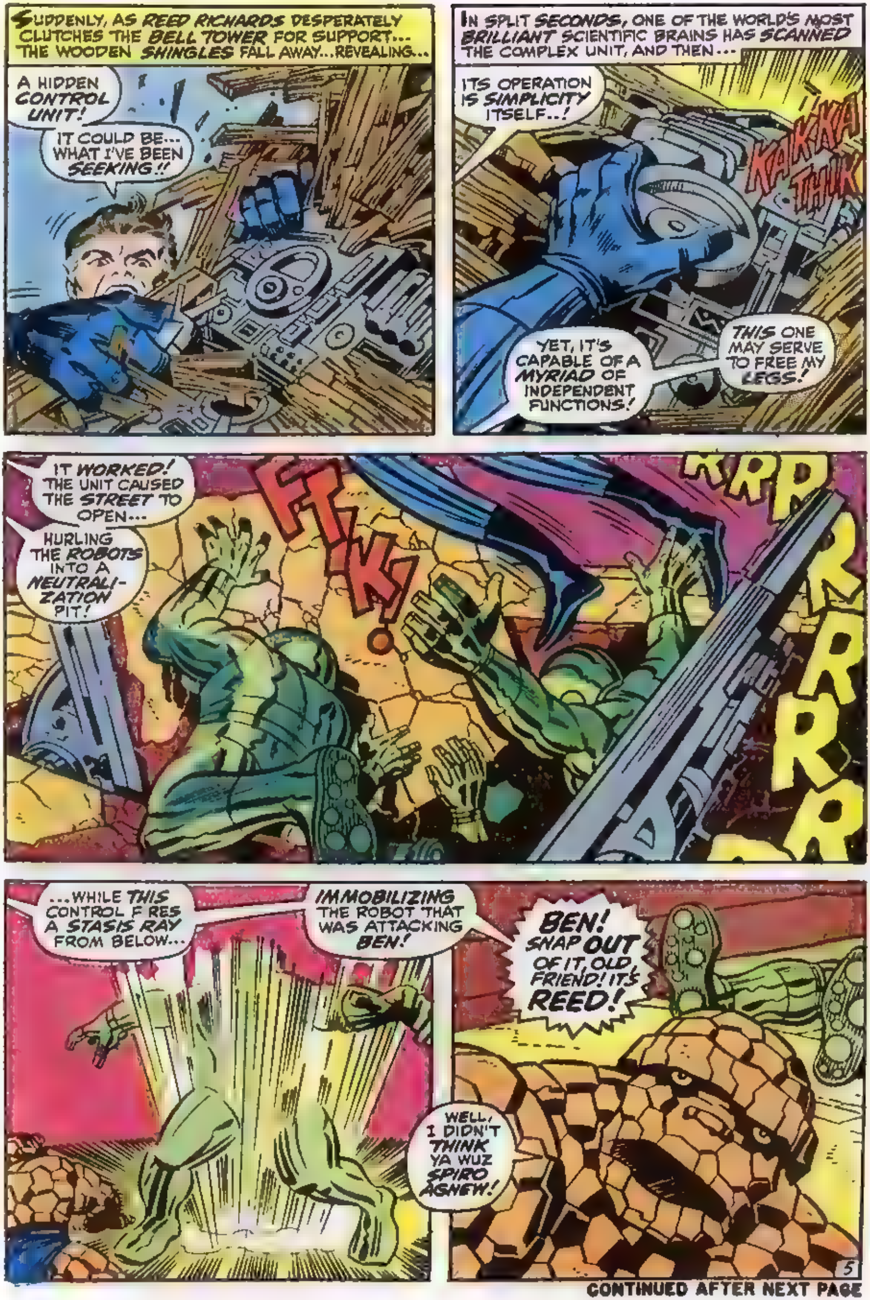
CAN'T... KEEP UP WITH 'EM!
THEY'RE MOVIN' TOO FAST... HITTIN' TOO HARD!
BEN! BEN! HOLD ON, BIG BUDDY!
THEY'RE ...ALL OVER THE PLACE... TRYIN' TA WEAR ME OUT!
AN' I GOT A FEELIN'... THEY'RE DOIN' IT!
GOT 'EM!
IT'S A GOOD THING... I CAME BACK FOR YOU!
I DON'T KNOW... HOW IT HAPPENED, BUT...
MY FLAME POWER IS RETURNING!
WOO-EEE! SING IT AGAIN, TINY TIM!
WE'RE STILL NOT IN THE CLEAR!
THE OTHER ROBOTS ARE COMING!
C'MON, BIG MAN... SNAP OUT OF IT!
I'LL TRY TO COVER US... WITH A CLOUD OF SMOKE!
THAT LAST BURST TOOK TOO MUCH OUT OF ME!
MY FLAME'S TOO WEAK TO USE AS A WEAPON AGAIN!
BUT, WITH LUCK, IT'LL SERVE TO HIDE US!
10.

SECONDS LATER...
HEY! WHERE'D EVERYONE GIT ALL THE HARDWARE?
WE DISCOVERED A CACHE OF ARMAMENTS HIDDEN BY DR. DOOM!
AND YOUR LEADER, THE FAMOUS MR. FANTASTIC, QUICKLY MODIFIED THEM FOR US!
I'LL BET DOOM WANTED THEM TO BE FOUND...
TO PROVE THAT THEY CAN'T STOP HIS ROBOTS!
BUT WHERE'S REED?? I HAVE TO REACH HIM!
YOU WILL FIND HIM IN THE CABIN, YONDER!
HEY, STRETCHO ... WHAT IN BLAZES DO YA THINK YOU'RE DOIN'??
I KNOW DR. DOOM...KNOW THE WAY HIS TWISTED MIND WORKS!
HE'D NEVER CREATE SUCH DESTRUCTIVE ROBOTS...WITHOUT A FAIL SAFE MEANS OF CONTROL!
I HAVE TO FIND IT... WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!
THAT'S WHAT WE CAME TO TELL YOU...
OUR TIME'S RUN OUT!!
THE ROBOTS HAVE REACHED THE VILLAGE!!
IN FACT... THERE THEY ARE NOW!
THE VILLAGERS ARE STARTING TO FIRE...BUT THEY DON'T STAND A CHANCE!
IF ONLY I COULD FIND THE THING I WANT!!
OUR POWERS ARE SLOWLY RETURNING TO US!
IF WE CAN ALL JUST HOLD OUT... A FEW MINUTES MORE!
STAND YOUR GROUND ...NO MATTER WHAT!
NOW WE MAY FALL... BUT WE WILL DIE LIKE MEN!
11

OUR BULLETS ARE USELESS AGAINST THE ROBOTS!
WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WAS ALL IN VAIN!
WHAT OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR??
WHY DO THEY NOT AID US?
THEY ARE TOO BUSY... SAVING THEMSELVES!
ABANDON YOUR POST!
THEY ARE PROGRAMMED FOR COMBAT TACTICS!
THEY CAN SENSE A SNIPER'S HIDING PLACE!
YET, THEY DO NOT SEEM TO SEEK OUR DEATHS...
IT IS AS THOUGH WE ARE ALREADY DOOMED!
REED!! WHERE'S CRYSTAL?? I DON'T SEE HER!
I SENT HER TO LOOK AFTER THE WOMEN-FOLK, JOHNNY!
HER ELEMENTAL POWER IS RETURNING...
SHE'S USING IT... TO GIVE THEM HOPE!
WHEN CAN WE USE OUR POWERS AGAIN?
HOLD OFF ...AS LONG AS YOU CAN!
THE LONGER WE WAIT... THE STRONGER WE'LL BE!
12

AND SO IT ENDS... AS I KNEW IT MUST!
THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE STILL RESISTING WITH THEIR CUSTOMARY VALOR...
BUT THIS TIME, ALAS, THEIR FATE IS TRULY SEALED!
IS THAT NOT SO, HAUPTMANN?
I AM NOT CERTAIN, EXCELLENCY!
STATE YOUR REASON, YOU UNSPEAKABLE CLOD!
...OR PAY THE PRICE FOR DISPUTING YOUR MONARCH!
WITH ALL RESPECT, EXCELLENCY... IT IS NEVER WISE TO UNDERESTIMATE THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
HAVE YOU NOT GIVEN THE ROBOTS ONE WEAKNESS... ONE ACHILLES HEEL??
SO LONG AS RICHARDS LIVES, THERE IS THE CHANCE HE MAY DISCOVER IT!
SO! EVEN A JACKAL MAY SPEAK WITH THE TONGUE OF A FOX!
THUS, YOU MAY LIVE A WHILE LONGER!
BUT, THE FANTASTIC FOUR SHALL NOT SHARE IN YOUR GOOD FORTUNE!
SINCE I HAVE LEFT A FATEFUL LOOPHOLE...
THEY MUST DIE BEFORE IT CAN BE FOUND!
13

THEN, EVEN AS THE REIGNING MONARCH SPEAKS...
TAKE SHELTER AT THE VILLAGE HALL!
FALL BACK! FALL BACK!
YOUR ARMS ARE USELESS AGAINST THE ROBOTS!
NOTHING IS GAINED BY GIVING YOUR LIVES IN VAIN!
YOU WERE TO LEAD US... TO INSPIRE US!
BUT YOUR WORDS REEK WITH THE STENCH OF DEFEAT!
THEY THINK WE'VE FAILED THEM... AND SO FAR THEY'RE RIGHT!
BUT NOT EVEN THEY CAN KNOW THE DANGER THAT... WAIT!!
A ROBOT!! I'VE BEEN CUT OFF!
SKTATH SKTATCH
CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER!
IF MY POWER IS EVER TO RETURN...
IT MUST BE NOW!
I CAN STRETCH AGAIN!
SO MY SUSPICIONS ARE CONFIRMED..!
DOOM USED AN ADVANCED FORM OF HYPNOSIS TO MAKE US POWER-LESS!
BUT, SO STRONG WERE OUR POWERS, THAT THE EFFECT COULDN'T LAS... OH NO!!
HE'S GOT MY LEGS!
14



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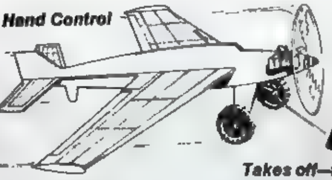
Hand Control



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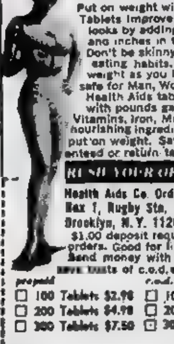

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THAT TAKES CARE OF SOME OF THE ROBOTS...
BUT WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?
THEY MUST HAVE SPLIT UP!
YEAH! SOME OF 'EM'S COMIN' FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION!
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?
HEY! THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VILLAGE!
THAT'S WHERE CRYS IS...WITH THE WOMEN!!
I'VE GOTTA GET TO HER!
WE'RE RIGHT WITH YOU, BOY!
LET'S GO!
HOWEVER, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
IF, BY SOME INCONCEIVABLE MISCHANCE, THE FANTASTIC FOUR DO DEFEAT MY LITTLE ARMY...
IT WILL AVAIL THEM NOTHING!
FOR, EVEN IF I LOSE... I WIN!
OBSERVE THAT MODEL OF MY TARGET VILLAGE..!
I HAVE SEEN IT MANY TIMES, EXCELLENCY!
BUT NEVER HAVE YOU SEEN IT... LIKE THIS!
IT RESTS UPON... TWO GIGANTIC CYLINDERS... OF DEADLY EXPLOSIVES!
BUT WHY? WHY??
SURELY YOU CAN GUESS!!
16

STOP CRINGING, YOU SPINELESS TOAD!
THIS IS JUST A MODEL... THE EXPLOSIVE WILL NOT DETONATE!
A PITY THAT I CANNOT SAY AS MUCH FOR THE TONS OF NITROGLYCERINE SO CLEVERLY HIDDEN BENEATH ITS REAL-LIFE COUNTERPART!
YOU WOULD DESTROY THE ENTIRE VILLAGE??!
I WOULD SHATTER HALF A PLANET TO DEFEAT THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
BUT FIRST... LET US SEE HOW THE SECOND WAVE OF ROBOTS FARES...!
THEY'RE COMING!
I'VE GOT TO WARN THE OTHERS!
I SAW THEM! THEY'LL BE HERE IN SECONDS!
IS EVERY-THING READY?
HECK NO... IT AINT!
WE FERGOT TA BAKE A CAKE!
NOW CLAM UP 'N GIT IN HERE!
17

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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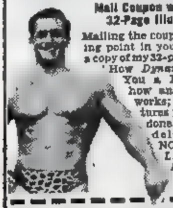

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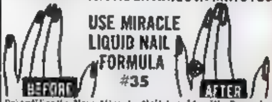

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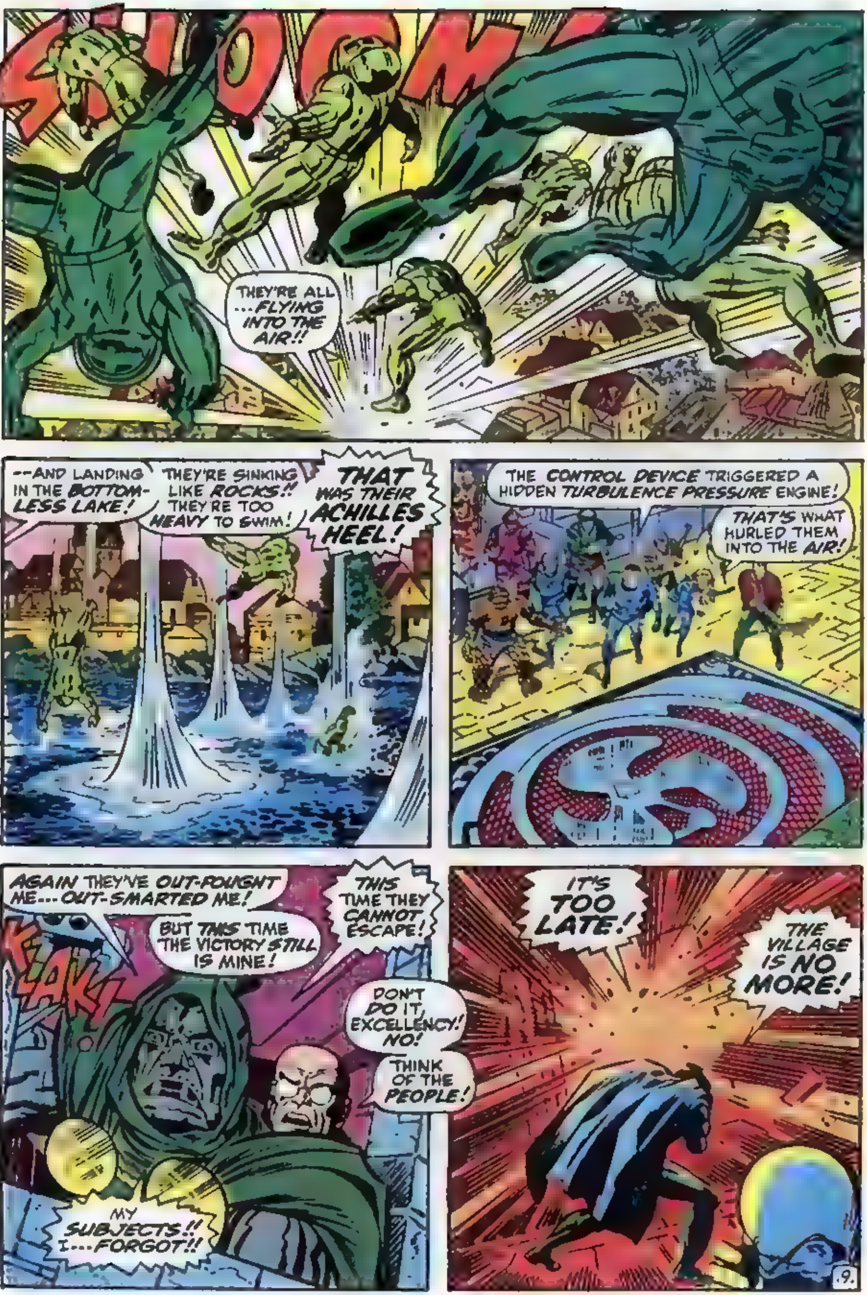


THEY'RE ALL ...FLYING INTO THE AIR!!
--AND LANDING IN THE BOTTOM-LESS LAKE!
THEY'RE SINKING LIKE ROCKS!! THEY'RE TOO HEAVY TO SWIM!
THAT WAS THEIR ACHILLES HEEL!
THE CONTROL DEVICE TRIGGERED A HIDDEN TURBULENCE PRESSURE ENGINE!
THAT'S WHAT HURLED THEM INTO THE AIR!
AGAIN THEY'VE OUT-FOUGHT ME... OUT-SMARTED ME!
BUT THIS TIME THE VICTORY STILL IS MINE!
THIS TIME THEY CANNOT ESCAPE!
DON'T DO IT, EXCELLENCY! NO!
THINK OF THE PEOPLE!
MY SUBJECTS!! I... FORGOT!!
IT'S TOO LATE!
THE VILLAGE IS NO MORE!

IMPOSSIBLE!! ONE SMALL SECTION STILL STANDS... UNTOUCHED... UNSCATHED!!
THE WHOLE BLASTED TOWN BLEW UP!
WHY AIN'T WE ALL DEAD??
IT'S AS THOUGH...SOME MIRACULOUS FORCE FIELD...
BUT NO! THERE'S ONLY ONE ... WHO COULD...
T... ISN'T POSSIBLE!!
ISN'T IT, MY DARLING?
SUE!!
THE INVISIBLE GIRL!! HER FORCE FIELD SAVED US!
I..I MUST BE DREAMING!
COME CLOSER! I'LL PROVE THAT YOU'RE NOT!
I WAS SO WORRIED... I INSISTED THAT COLONEL FURY TELL ME WHERE YOU WERE!
I..I JUST DON'T KNOW ...WHAT TO SAY!
THEN, I LEFT THE BABY WITH ALICIA...AND HERE I AM!
WE NEVER SHOULDA GONE AWAY WITHOUT 'ER!
YOU'RE RIGHT, BEN! WE ALL BELONG TOGETHER!
IT AIN'T THAT! SHE'S THE ONLY ONE CAN KEEP STRETCHO QUIET!
...'N NOW...
LET'S TACKLE DOOM!
NEXT
THE WRAP-UP!
20

MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS • MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS • MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS

IRRELEVANT ITEMS OF LASTING INCONSEQUENCE!

ITEM! As these imperishable words are written, STAN THE MAN is being intrepidly interviewed for a zingy feature article about mighty Marvel in the February issue of EYE Magazine! (And if you dare to miss it — SHEESH!) But our leader better hurry, 'cause he's due to deliver a lilting lecture at the Columbia School of Journalism in a few hours — after which he'll be winging his way south to Duke University, to "conduct a symposium or colloquium, teach a class, or hold a major lecture!" as the irresistible invitation so delightfully put it! The only thing that's worrying the rest of the Bullpen is — where does Smiley get the time to write more complete full-length epics per month than any other man in history?

ITEM In case we haven't told you disc jockeys around the country, such as WWKE's "SICK VIC" ALLEN in sunny Florida, have been requesting actual scripts of F.F., SPIDEY, DR. STRANGE, and other Marvel masterworks, to record and read verbatim over the air. Sounds like a real glitzy kick to us — so be listening for them, hear? The way things are going, they'll probably start popping up all over! (And of course we're kinda proud of the fact that these radio pros feel the quality of our dialogue, is worthy of prime time radio broadcasting with virtually no editing or revisions!)

ITEM! While we're at it, here's another nice-nice! The prestigious publishing house of Geo. A. Pflaum has recently produced a fascinating new book, entitled EXPLORING THE FILM, by William Kuhns and Robert Stanley. What has that to do with Marvel, you ask? Well, there's an entire chapter devoted to pictorial angles — and it features twenty full pages of SPIDER-MAN battling the RHINO as an illustrative example! Incidentally, author BOB STANLEY visited with SMILEY a few days ago and revealed himself to be another merry Marvel madman — as well as one of the best-informed and truly with-it academicians we've met since Honest Irv!

ITEM: Speaking of interesting visitors — and we've had 'em all, from famous director FEDERICO FELLINI, to prize-winning playwright WILLIAM GIBSON, to the master satirist HARVEY KURTZMAN — we have a new one to add to our riotous roster. So, say hello to ZIKA BOGDANOVIC, film, TV, and jazz critic for NIN, the weekly magazine in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. He's visiting the U.S. under the exchange program sponsored by the Ford Foundation. Y'know, it's a funny thing — so many scholars are spending so much time studying Marvel, that if we had any sense, we'd head for the hills — before they seal us in pickle jars! PAX ET JUSTITIA!

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Okay, it's time for our moment of truth! We know you were promised a new INHUMANS mag by this time — and we know you're still inhuman-less! Some of you think we've just forgotten — others think we've changed our minds, and haven't bothered to clue you in. Still others think we didn't want the extra work. But, the straight scoop is — we started using a new printer some months back — (You've probably already noticed the vast improvement in the clarity and brilliance of our coloring) — but the printing changeover meant we were given a new set of deadline dates — dates which require our mags to be produced even faster than before! Hence, we once again were temporarily forced to abandon our plans for new titles until we could catch our breath. However, we're starting to get on schedule again, so maybe THIS will some day be known as The Year Of The Inhumans!

Honestly, we wish there were time for us to personally explain many of the things we do — things which are occasionally misunderstood or misinterpreted by you frantic ones. For example, we sometimes get angry letters, berating us for having taken a certain artist off a certain strip. Usually you, the reader, think the move was made because we simply wanted to make a change — whereas the actual reason may be totally different. Artists are often transferred at their own request, because they've grown bored with a strip — or because they feel they can't draw it as quickly as another strip — or because another artist is ill, or on vacation, and needs a replacement — or because we feel there is another strip which is more important for that artist to do — or the other strip may be less popular, and we feel that it will increase in popularity if that artist is given a chance at it. There are some artists who insist on a certain inker and certain inkers who prefer special pencillers. Some artist/writer teams work better than others, and — in our never-ending effort to improve the quality of the mags you spend your hard-earned shekels on — we find ourselves continually changing, experimenting, and innovating — for, though we often fall on our trusting little faces, we want you to know we're in there TRYING *every minute!*

Excelsior!
Smiley

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

Marvel-ous Mags On Sale Right Now!

NOT BRAND ECHH #13: The Simple Surfer soars again — Dr. Deranged scores again — while feeble Forbush-Man snores again! And wait'll you dig Auntie May's diary! The biggest smash yet!

SPIDER-MAN #72: A new artist on layouts! A great old super villain! And the return of a guy you thought we forgot! You'll be "Rocked by the SHOCKER!"

AVENGERS #63: "And in This Corner . . . Goliath!" But it's a fearsome, fighting-mad Goliath you've never seen before — as our awesome Avengers undergo the most unexpected change of all!

X-MEN #55: The secret of Cyclops' brother revealed at last! A battle to the finish with forces of the LIVING PHARAOH!. Plus — the shocking origin of the Angel! Don't miss it!

DAREDEVIL #51: Yep, we've got another wild-and-wooly new arch-fiend for DD to tangle with — and when it comes to action — this is for you!

THOR #163: Few are the earth-shattering villains strong enough to battle the Thunder God — but there is such a one — the merciless master of menace — the revenge ridden PLUTO!

CAPTAIN AMERICA #113: So, Cap is dead eh? Well then, how do you account for what happens now?? And would you have guessed the origin of MADAME HYDRA? It's sheer spectacle!

HULK #115: It looks like Old Super-Villains' Month here at Marvel — especially when the LEADER, truly the most dangerous of all, comes back to life — to trap the Hulk, at last!

IRON MAN #13: The maddened, monstrous CONTROLLER is still at large — and even ol' Shellhead seems helpless against him! And then — but, you'll wanna see for yourself, pilgrim!

SUB-MARINER #13: Stunned by the seeming death of Dorma — battered by forces that defy description — this is our awesome, agonized Atlantean at his battling best! A must!

CAPTAIN MARVEL #13. Mar-Vell is confronted with a choice . . . gain revenge on Yon-Rogg, or save Carol Danvers from the MAN-SLAYER — and wait'll you learn his decision!

SHIELD #12: The bombshell British artist writer team of Smith and Parkhouse has turned SHIELD against Fury in an electrifying saga you'll never forget!

DR. STRANGE #180: This one starts in Times Square — and ends up in the farthest reaches of Infinity — as our magical master takes on the legions of NIGHTMARE! And if he loses — a planet dies!

SGT. FURY #65: The most senses-shattering war saga ever — and the simple, shocking title says all you need to know . . . "Eric Koenig . . . TRAITOR!"

CAPT. SAVAGE #13: The hard-hitting Raiders on special assignment in Europe! A weirdo title like "Junk-Heap Juggernauts!" What else do you need to convince ya this one's a blast!

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES #20: At last! The most requested new solo star of all — the one and only DR. DOOM! And talking about devilish foes — the fiendish Diablo returns! A collector's item!

MARVEL TALES #20: Who says three's a crowd? Nobody — not when that threesome is Spidey, Thor, and the blazing Human Torch! Another bargain-basement bombshell from Marvel!

MILLIE THE MODEL #170 — CHILI #1 — MAD ABOUT MILLIE #1 — what more can we say? They're fast, funny, and far-out! And, nutty as it seems, they're among Marvel's TOP-sellers!

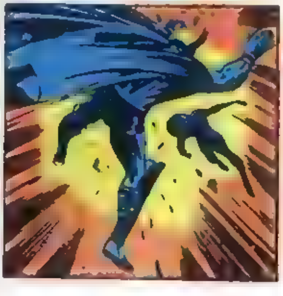
AND, STILL ON SALE

SILVER SURFER #5: The Stranger strikes! The Surfer walks the streets as a human! The Fantastic Four make a guest appearance! And that's only part of it!

COLLECTORS' ITEM CLASSICS #20: The fabulous F.F. — the ever-powerful Iron Man — and the dazzling Dr. Strange — in some of their greatest triumphs! Talk about bargains!

MIGHTY MARVEL WESTERN #4: Rawhide Kid — Two-Gun Kid — and Kid Colt, Outlaw! Three names towering above the rest — and all yours in one pistol-packed mag!

RAWHIDE KID #69: And now . . . the Executioner! The most popular western hero of all — in his most suspenseful shoot-out ever! This one you gotta see!



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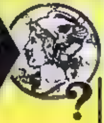

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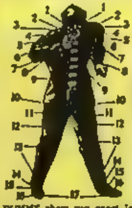

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Fantastic Four Fan Page

Send letters to LEE and KIRBY
THE MARVEL COMICS GROUP
SECOND FLOOR 625 MADISON AV.
NEW YORK 10022 N. Y.

Dear Stan and Jack,
"The Mark of––the Madman!" was truly in the tradition of the stories one finds in the FANTASTIC FOUR. It was a wondrous sight to see once again the Inhumans in the FANTASTIC FOUR from whence they debuted so long ago. Now one of the Inhumans is to be a member of the Fantastic Four. Crystal, the girl with an indescribable power, is the perfect replacement for mother Richards, and most shall she improve the FF. Only with the artwork of the King and his collaboration with the omnipotent one and added embellishment by Joe Sinnott could the F.F. be. As I await the ultimate climax of this FF–Inhumans story, I only hope and pray to see the return of Doctor Doom in the F.F.

William R. Lund, 1218 E. Ermina
Spokane, Wash. 99207

You must be a mind-reader, Bill! You know how we hate to keep the Doc out of things . . . he's so sensitive! But now he's back, we figure everybody'll be happy! As you've probably seen by now, he's ensnared the F.F. in a deadly, mind-boggling trap . . . so stick around, the excitement's just beginning!

Dear Stan and Jack,
Although long a Marvel fan, I had never heard of Medusa until I met her in her own special in MARVEL SUPER-HEROES #15. And, I confess, I fell in love with her immediately. With the exception of Spidey's Gwen, she is the only female in Marveldom who is feminine, truly feminine, in thought and appearance. Imagine my dismay then when I open FF #82 to find the "new" Medusa. What a bummer! Instead of the Medusa I know and love, I find a typical, square-jawed, steely-eyed, barracuda-mouthed Marvel heroine. Quick, then, ere the next ish strikes, a salvage job: the Medusa chin must be rounded, not square; the mouth full and soft, not hard and black-lipped; the eyes must be almond shaped and thickly lashed, not cat-eyed with long, thin lashes; the mask must be straight on top, not bat-winged and on the bottom it must follow the curve of her cheek, rather than form dagger-points below the eyes; most important, the hair must not sweep back like unto the mane of a male lion, but fall softly forward over the brow. In short, Medusa must look as she does in MSH #15––and let's see more of her!

Gene Frischholz, 647 Lytton
Palo Alto, Calif.

We don't quite know how to take that, Gene. And another thing: in that indescribable ish, Medusa was shown only three times. And one of those was a side-view with her face covered by her own hair! The second time, she's supposed to look grim and hard, with a firm jaw and everything. Wouldn't you look grim and hard, faced with capture by Maximus?? And in the third shot, we think she looks ultra feminine. After admitting defeat, she relaxed into her normal facial expression! Although an Inhuman, she is only human!

Dear Stan and Jack,
Reed Richards talks too much! In FF #76, for example, Reed tells Ben and Johnny that the world depends upon their success . . . a world which includes "my wife, Sue . . . and our unborn baby. It also includes Crystal––and Alicia––." If Ben hadn't cut him off, he would have mentioned everyone he knew from Forbushman to Mr. Lumpkin.

Mike Hirschbach
Two Mountains, Quebec, Canada

Well, Mike, you know what a considerate guy Reed is! In mentioning Sue and their unborn baby, and realizing that Ben and Johnny were in danger, too . . . he gave a mention to the people closest to them! But, they already knew how dangerous the mission was . . . and reminded him of the fact! Reed tends to think aloud a lot; being the leader he wants everyone to know what's going on in his mind. Which is only fair The F.F. couldn't work as group if they were constantly in the dark as to what plans their leader is forming. So, you see, Reed doesn't really talk too much . . . he just thinks a lot!

Dear Stan, Jack, Joe, Artie, Pens, Pencils, and Inks,
I'd like to put in a word about the people who think that our Fantastic Four has gone to the dogs! They must be nuts! Ninety-nine percent of those guys must have been collecting them from a couple years back, and they must be stupid to think that the Fantastic Four are their way down. Look at the Galactus series which started in #48 (correct me if I'm wrong) and apparently ended in #'s 76 and 77, only a few issues ago. And then, you brought out #82, the return of the Inhumans. Magnificent! So don't think for an instant that they have ever gone down or ever will go down in popularity!

Keith Treichel, 637 Forward Dr.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

We never thought for a moment that they would, Keith. And we'd like to thank you for that little boost, and all the other loyal fans who're keeping the F.F. on top of the tree!

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P.M.M. (PERMANENT MARVELITE MAXIMUS)–ANYONE POSSESSING ALL FOUR OF THE OTHER TITLES.

F.F.F. (FEARLESS FRONT FACER)–AN HONORARY TITLE BESTOWED FOR DEVOTION TO MARVEL ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY.

Dear Stan and Jack,

Whenever a major change occurs within a long-running comic strip series, it seems to evoke a certain nostalgia as one remembers the tales of old. Of course, this probably won't be a permanent alteration of the F.F. role call, this entrance of the Exquisite Elemental, but it does bring to mind other landmark issues; and this certain issue, the 81st in the continuing life of the Fantastic Four, does not succeed as effectively as did most of its predecessors. The weakest point, one which has plagued the Fantastic Four for the past few issues, is their current adversaries. Usually, Jolly Jack Kirby's full page layouts are as interesting as the one on page 11; but the full page view of the Wizard, an inferior villain at best, seemed purposeless. The entire first sequence with the Wizard moaning his morbid and malevolent monologue as he zips through the city airways destroying all sorts of idiotic inanimate objects was absurd. Where are the intricate villains of yesteryear who had some basic reality? As a contrast to the unusually bad handling of the Wizard, Stan managed to make the first three pages, Crystal's introduction into the team, thoroughly interesting and resisted most of the traumatic urges that usually prevail when Sue is on the scene. The fight scene, with the exception of the full page spread on page 11, seemed rushed, lacking most of Jack's usual care of detailing his panels. That third panel on the 15th page was terrible. The position that Crystal was in made her seem deformed. But, one cannot judge the poor Exquisite Elemental on the basis of this issue alone. Perhaps, along the way, she will develop as far as the rest of the Marvel Group. With a bit more care from Stan and Jack, anything is possible.

Donald F. Mc Gregor, 43 Wildwood Ave.
Providence, R.I. 02907

You're right, Don, no matter what heights you reach . . . you always have to try harder to reach that sometimes inaccessible pinnacle of perfection. Criticisms like yours are always valued highly . . . praise is a nice thing to receive, too (before all you steely-eyed ones start reachin' for your pens and paper!).

Dear Stan and Jack,

I'm 14 years old and proudly proclaim "I have read every F.F. issue!" I was brought up on the FANTASTIC FOUR, and a finer piece of literature I have yet to find. I've often wondered why something wasn't done to make the Thing become Ben Grimm permanently and still retain his powers. Then it came to me! What would I do without that face? Ben brings life into the F.F. Without that lump of orange brick, I'd be lost! With 20 days of school every month for 10 months a year, with all that correct grammar, it's a great relief to read the beautiful slang that pours out of bashful Ben – slang brought on by the scientific words of Reed, the pranks of the Yancy Street Gang, and other assorted gimmicks thrown into your mag. Of course, as Ben, the Thing would still talk the same, but somehow it just wouldn't be right. Even if it means being cursed by millions of F.F. readers, I say that the Thing should stay as sweet as he is. 'Nuff said!

Suzanne Scala, 9031 Ft. Hamilton Parkway
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Not until we've had our two-cents worth, Suzie! After all, the ever-lovin' Thing has been with us so long, we'd hate to see him go, too. It seems like your blushin' Benjamin is destined to be the orange-skinned love-bug he's always been. Everybody seems to like him that way, and as long as poor ol' Ben can keep facing himself in the mirror each morning, that's the way he'll stay!

Dear Stan and Jack,

I'd like to talk in favor of two of the F.F.'s so called "villains". First, Galactus. Let's not get with that "holler-than-thou" stuff about him; none are more known for widespread murder of lesser beings than the human race. Not only do we kill to survive (as does Galactus) but also in "sport". You must admit, the morals of man are quite warped. And then there's Doctor Doom. The pure evil incarnate is just not there. He has a personal thing with the Fantastic Four. So what? He is a tragic figure, who happens to be a ruler, and a good one at that. He does have some bad aggressive characteristics. However, he has a country to defend, and defend it he should. Thus, the hero side of Doc Doom would make one of the most unique and wondrous strips to be found. I believe that Doc Doom should have even helped the F.F. when, say, Galactus was about to destroy the Earth. After all, his life was at stake too, and his nation's existence hung in the balance. Think it over, guys.

Doug Fratz, R.R.1
Accident, Maryland

Duly received, acknowledged, and thought over, Doug. We can't visualize Doc helping the F.F. against anybody . . . unless he planned to double-cross 'em and throw in his lot with the other villain. As to the point of Doom being a good ruler . . . some people thought that Adolf Hitler was a good leader, but it didn't stop him from being insane! We're not saying there's any comparison between the two . . . Doom's fight is between him and the F.F., or anybody who stands between him and the F.F. And anybody who can hate with that kind of vehemence, can't be very nice to know!

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